

Notes from Elsewhere

- Irish developer and amateur racer Martin Birrane has bought Lola Cars. "We intend to re-establish the company in the Indy car market," Birrane said. "I have great respect for what Eric Broadley achieved over the years with Lola," Birrane added. "He may have made a mistake in trying to pursue his dream of having a top Formula 1 team, but that shouldn't detract from Lola's reputation for building excellent customer cars."

- A Las Vegas newspaper reported in early September that Clark County, Nev., had been approached by parties representing Bernie Ecclestone with a proposal to build an 18-hole golf course inside a Formula 1 circuit on 145 acres of county land in the flight pattern of McCarran International Airport. Ecclestone, meanwhile, acknowledges he is still working to stage a Grand Prix at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway....

- Los Angeles became the largest city ever to close off a portion of its streets for an auto race, as more than 111,000 spectators attended the first annual Ford Los Angeles Grand Prix for vintage racing cars during the three days of Labor Day weekend. Some 400 drivers took part in the event on the 1.6-mile circuit, with the fastest lap of the weekend turned in by Bill Auberlen in a Formula 5000 Lola T332-Chevrolet at just over 59 seconds and more than 97mph.

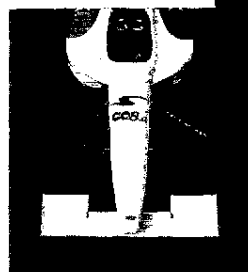
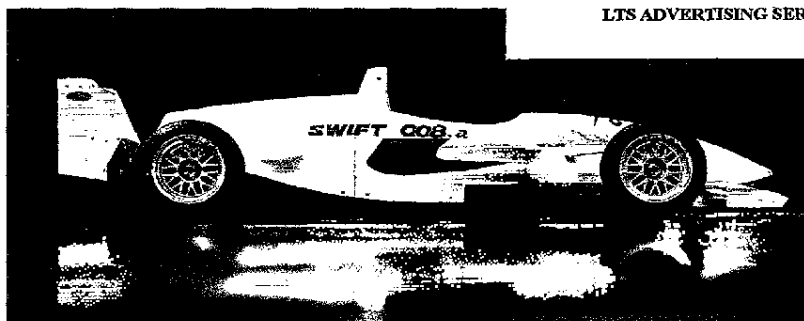
- Craig Breedlove has postponed his bid to reclaim the Land Speed Record from Briton Richard Noble after his jet-powered "Spirit of America" suffered an engine failure during practice runs in the Black Rock desert in Nevada. Meanwhile, Noble is pressing on with his effort to raise the LSR bar higher with his "Thrust SSC" car for RAF pilot Andy Green. A new LSR is established by a two-way average speed that is at least one percent faster than the existing record, currently 633.468mph. The SCCA will monitor the runs.

- After more than 16 years of working together, defending NHRA Winston Top Fuel champion Kenny Bernstein and crew chief Dale Armstrong parted company following the Keystone Nationals. Lee Beard has been hired away from the Bruce Sarver-driven Carquest Top Fuel team to serve as Bernstein's crew chief for at least the balance of the current season.

In The News

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New Swift Atlantic Chassis Debuts

■ Swift's new 008.a, which will eventually become the single-spec chassis of the KOOL/Toyota Atlantic Championship, was introduced to the public prior to the closing race of the series' 1997 season at Laguna Seca. Built with the objective of providing effective cost control for the series while also offering improvements in both performance and driver safety, the 008.a will lift Atlantic to "the next echelon of racing technology," according to Toyota Motorsports boss John Koenig.

The new car, designed by Roman Slobodskyj with input from Swift technical director David Bruns and aerodynamicist Mark Handford, features a state-of-the-art, raised-nose, carbon fiber monocoque with a sequentially shifted Hewland 5-speed gearbox and new, larger 15in. BBS wheels that will carry a new generation of the series' spec Yokohama radial tires. The new Swift will be powered by a revised version of Toyota's 4A-GE engine, the 16-valve, four-cylinder that

has been the formula's power source since 1989.

Among the improvements Toyota has made to the 240hp engine are a redesigned oil pan and cam cover that allow the power plant to sit an inch lower in the chassis and contribute significantly to increased chassis stiffness, and the next evolution of engine management system, that includes fully sequential fuel injection, a "shift-without lift" feature, four-coil ignition and greater data-diagnostic capability.

SWIFT KICK
All-new design from California-based constructor Swift incorporates safety and functional refinements to the state of the Toyota Atlantic art.

The new car is being distributed by Carl A. Haas Automobile Imports from its base in Lincolnshire, Ill., with a price tag of \$91,500, fixed until Dec. 1, 1999. Swift executive vp Alex Cross noted that 46 orders had been taken as of the Laguna weekend, with at least 20 of the new chassis expected to be on the grid for the series' 1998 season opener at Homestead, Fla., next March.

Who's Watching What

Television ratings determined by the A.C. Nielsen Co., for original-broadcast major auto racing events through Sept. 14:

1997 FIGURES				1998 FIGURES			
Sanctioning Body/Event	Network	Rating	Share	HH	Rating	Share	HH
NASCAR Busch/Bristol	ESPN	1.1	NA	0.8m	NA	NA	NA
NASCAR Winston Cup/Bristol	ESPN	3.1	NA	2.5m	3.3	NA	2.3m
Crutchen Trucks/Working Men	ESPN	1.1	NA	0.9m	1.4	NA	1.0m
Indian GP	ESPN	0.3	NA	0.2m	0.6	NA	0.2m
1 Cup/Darlington	ESPN	4.0	NA	3.3m	3.8	NA	2.7m
1 Cup	ESPN	1.5	NA	1.1m	1.8	NA	1.1m
Shelby	TNN	0.5	1	0.3m	NA	NA	NA
Mission	TNN	0.5	1	0.2m	NA	NA	NA
Boals	TNN	0.8	2	0.5m	0.6	2	0.4m
Top Trucks/Richmond	ESPN	0.3	NA	0.2m	0.8	2	0.5m
Richmond	ESPN	1.2	NA	0.9m	NA	NA	NA
1 Cup/Richmond	ESPN	3.3	NA	2.4m	3.0	NA	2.9m
Indy	ESPN	0.6	NA	0.4m	1.2	NA	1.0m
Indy	ESPN	0.3	NA	0.2m	0.5	NA	0.2m
1 Cup/Indianapolis	ESPN	3.0	NA	2.7m	NA	NA	NA
Indy	ESPN	1.2	2	0.8m	1.7	3	0.7m

and broadcast on pay-per-view

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